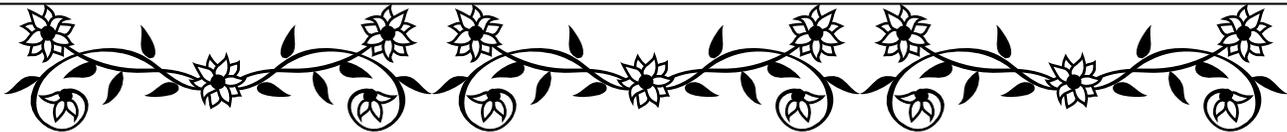


# SPECIAL NEWS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS



## Winter 2007

Good News... March 21st marks the first day of Spring 2007! Start putting away those mittens and snow shovels! It's time for warm, sunny spring days filled with extra outside playtime for the kids!

Check your calendars and plan on being our guest at one or all of the spring-scheduled events. The Parent Care giving Training, Delaware Parent Leadership Forum and the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Inclusion Conference all offer a variety of information, resources and support.

Please feel free to call Kellie McKeefery (302-995-8617) or Jennifer Donahue (302-424-7300) with ideas and suggestions of topics of interest. Reach us via-mail

[kellie.mckeefery@state.de.us](mailto:kellie.mckeefery@state.de.us) and  
[jenniferl.donahue@state.de.us](mailto:jenniferl.donahue@state.de.us)

**Kellie & Jennifer**

### 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Inclusion Conference

#### Breaking Barriers & Building Bridges:

Birth to 21

Thursday, May 3, 2007

8:00am-3:15 pm

Sheraton Dover Hotel & Conference Center

1570 N. DuPont Highway

Dover, Delaware

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER

Contact Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI)

(800) 870-DATI or (302) 651-6790; TDD (302) 651-6794

(302) 856-1081 or email [rathel@asel.udel.edu](mailto:rathel@asel.udel.edu)

## PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

When: Wednesday, May 9, 2007

### Delaware Parent Leadership Forum

This full day of instruction will prepare and celebrate parents as leaders in the programs, policy decisions, and systems change efforts that affect the lives of Delaware's children. Parents will learn their strengths and how to use them to meaningfully participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of which they are currently consumers. All parents have something to contribute and can be valued as partners and resources.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Samtra Devard  
Parent Leadership Coordinator

Phone: 302-834-5735

E-mail: [snl\\_devard@comcast.net](mailto:snl_devard@comcast.net)

**ON-SITE CHILDCARE AVAILABLE**

### Parent, Caregiver Training At Easter Seals

"Handling Family Stress and the Changing Role of the Father"

**Tuesday, April 3, 2007 from 6:00-8:00 PM at Easter Seals in New Castle, DE.**

Call Easter Seals Social Worker, Gwen Harris, (302) 324-4444 ext.2043 to register and for more information; we look forward to seeing you!



Special News for Special Needs  
Delaware Health & Social Services, Child Development Watch, Winter 2007





## National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month. Healthy eating habits help babies and toddlers grow healthy bodies, hearts and minds. Offer healthy food choices for snack and at each meal.

### Ten Eating Strategies for Babies and Toddlers Ways to help your child become a healthy eater:

1. Remember: Meals are about more than food.
2. Create routines around mealtimes
3. Establish regular meal and snack time beginning when your child is 9-12 months old.
4. Offer 3 to 4 healthy food choices at each meal.
5. Don't force your baby or toddler to eat
6. Offer your child a healthy snack between meals if you think she is hungry.
7. Limit juice to no more than 4 ounces a day.
8. Be flexible about letting little ones up from the table when they are done.
9. Don't give up on new foods!
10. Turn off the TV (computers, and other screens) at mealtime.

If you are concerned about your child's weight or activity level, talk to your child's health care provider.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact: ZERO TO THREE National Center for  
Infants, Toddlers and Families  
Phone: (800) 899-4301  
E-mail: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)



These materials adapted from Healthy from the Start: How feeding nurtures your young child's body, heart and mind. ZERO TO THREE National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. Endorsed by: American Academy of Pediatrics.

## INFORMATION CORNER



Support Services and education resources are available to families in need of help. Our community partners are also helpful in navigating the system, providing information, education and family support.

**Add Parent Information Center of Delaware** to your resource list. They provide information about disabilities and special education rights, consultation about obtaining appropriate services for children with disabilities and helps parents prepare for Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other school meetings.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#### Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC)

5570 Kirkwood Highway  
Orchard Commons Business Center  
Wilmington, DE 19802  
(302) 999-7394

City of Wilmington Office:  
3703 N. Market Street (PAL Center)  
Wilmington, DE 19802  
(302) 764-3252

Georgetown:  
109 N. Bedford Street  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
(302) 856-9880

Toll-free number: (888) 547-4412  
[www.picofdel.org](http://www.picofdel.org)

# Selecting a Child Care Provider

To become aware of licensed childcare or programs operating near your home, contact **Family and Workplace Connection** at [www.familyandworkplace.org](http://www.familyandworkplace.org) or call in

New Castle County: 479-1660

Kent and Sussex Counties: 1-800-660-6602

## For Subsidized Child Care:

New Castle County: 255-9670

Kent County: 739-4437

Sussex County: 856-5340

To find a program that is appropriate for your child:

Visit the childcare program when they are open. Schedule a time to meet with the director.

## As you visit, look for these characteristics:

- Will the space meet the needs of your child?
- Is the space clean and free of hazards?
- Is there a plan for handling emergencies?
- Are there toys and equipment that are safe, age-appropriate, and in reach of children.

## When meeting with the director of the program, ask:

- Is the program licensed by Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing?
- Is the program accredited or working towards accreditation which indicates the quality of the program?
- What are the director's and staff's training and experience? What is their experience in having a child like your child in their program?
- What are the guidelines and procedures for involving children with special needs?
- How will your child be introduced to adults and other children?
- How does the program handle sick children?
- What educational opportunities are provided for you and your child?
- Could your child receive any therapy within the child's room at the program?
- What is the schedule for you child's group?

These materials adapted from: Growing Together Calendar, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, and <http://childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/102e.pdf> by Deborah Amsden for the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.



When you have a meeting with the Early Care and Education Program staff, be prepared to discuss:

## Who your child is:

What would you like the teacher to know about your child?

- Favorite activities
- Favorite toys, games, books
- Favorite foods
- Pets

## What is your child's daily routine?

- How does your child get along with other children?
- What is the best way of handling these situations with your child?
  - When your child gets fussy?
  - When it is time to take a nap?
  - What comforts your child?
  - What do you do to calm your child when he or she has been upset?
  - How do you reassure your child?
  - How do you reward you child?

## Other details about the child

- Does your child have any play restrictions?
- Does your child have any hearing or vision problems?
- Does your child have any physical disabilities?
- Does your child have any problems learning new tasks?
- Are there any others working with your child (specialists such as a therapist, teacher, and service coordinator)?
- Does your child have an IFSP, an Individual Family Service Plan- a plan for any child identified as having a special need, disability or developmental delay?
- Does your child use any special equipment? And if so, when?

# Childcare- A Family's Journey

By Michelle Arthurs

We are the Arthur's Family, Michelle and David and our 4 children, Dave, Devin, Kayla and Kennedie. When I was pregnant with Kennedie, we had made arrangements before she was born for a childcare provider for when I returned to work.

Kennedie was born on a very early July morning. Ten fingers, ten toes, an APGAR of 9. At discharge, a nurse surprisingly discovered a heart murmur. Our lives were changed forever.

Three months later, Kennedie was diagnosed with Down syndrome and a severely damaged heart. The next four months, I cared for Kennedie at home. The time was quickly approaching where Kennedie would be transition to an in-home daycare.

Transition from home care to daycare in general can be very stressful for both the child and the family. We were lucky that Kennedie was able to transition into a nurturing and caring childcare environment.

As she got older, we realized that she needed a more structured environment to support her development. Just as Kennedie was growing and being taught new skills, our family continued to gain strength and learn from Kennedie.

Finding the best childcare for Kennedie was a journey of highs and lows. I remember the first two weeks of the new center, I would walk out from dropping Kennedie off and praying to God, "Please let her have a good day, Lord", "Please keep her safe", "and I know that I am doing the right thing for her, just watch over her". In time, we realized that it was not the best choice for her needs. We continued to search for daycares making four changes in one year

A change in a child's daycare is stressful for both child and parent. We learned that as parents we must communicate expectations and ask specific questions regarding the center's ability to handle a child with special needs. Be part of developing the goals for your child. Share with the staff skills about your child that have been mastered at home or outside of the daycare setting. Share a list of your child's likes and dislikes with the daycare staff. Creating an open communication system between parent and daycare is invaluable. Making a quick call to the daycare, e-mailing or scheduling a specific time to discuss problems or progress helps strengthen and support your child.

Today, Kennedie attends a typical daycare center. Treated equally to the other students, she continues to work hard in reaching her goals and striving for new challenges. We are proud of all her accomplishments and the strength she has provided to us.

Finding the best daycare for your typical child or a child with special needs is a difficult process. Use the love in your heart and the passion for your child to guide, strengthen and support decisions regarding the most suitable daycare for your child. If you would like to learn more about our experience, please email us at [maarthurs@verizon.net](mailto:maarthurs@verizon.net)



## TRANSITION REMINDER

Transition is the process of helping children transition from Part C, the Child Development Watch Early Intervention System to public or private preschool programs and services.

### THINGS TO DO.....

- **Sign** a release of information for early intervention records to be given to the school district or other preschool programs.
- **Ask** your service coordinator about scheduling a transition conference well before your child's third birthday.
- **Develop** transition goals and objectives as part of your individual Family Service Plan.
- **Visit** preschool programs in your community (public school, Head Start, private programs).
- **Verify** with your service coordinator that needed information concerning your child and records have been transferred to the local school district or other preschool program. Full records include: the current IFSP (with short term goals and objectives), current evaluations including at least 2 standardized measures, < 6 months old, and recent updates of the IFSP and evaluations, and relevant medical records (if, e.g., your child has allergies or other special health care needs).
- **Participate** in all Individualized Education Program (IEP) planning meeting and contribute to the development of an IEP if your child is eligible.



**CALL YOUR CHILD'S SERVICE COORDINATOR WITH TRANSITION QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.**

Adapted from Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project (1996). A step-by-step family guide for transition into preschool. Frankfor, KY: Cabinet for Health Services and Kentucky Early Intervention System.